

Part B

**LEAD AGENCY/BUREAU AND/OR SUBCOMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP
REPORT (Agencies with Lead Responsibilities Assigned under the new Circular
A-16 in Appendix E - <http://www.fgdc.gov/publications/a16final.html#appendix>)**

1. Program/Activity Name:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Branch of Habitat Assessment - National Wetlands Inventory Project

2. What are the specific federal programs this data supports?

NWI data supports resource management and decision-making by Federal Programs in and outside of the Service and Department. This scientific data is made publicly available over the Internet by the Service and is used by Federal, State, Tribal and local entities in land management, acquisition, restoration, and assessment of fish and wildlife populations. This includes key programs related to Federal land and floodplain planning; watershed management; federal water/energy/transportation project planning; wetland restoration and permitting; fisheries and migratory bird conservation; endangered species conservation and recovery planning; and Federal accomplishment reporting for these Service programs.

3. Uses of Data: How does your data benefit customers and support agency missions?

The mission of the Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of people. Migratory birds, fishes, and endangered species need sufficient quality habitat in an ever-changing landscape. Wetlands occupy only 5% of the landscape of the conterminous United States, but play an important role in sustaining these trust resources and the Nation's environment and economic well-being. NWI data are being strategically updated and used by Service biologists and managers in consultation with States, tribes, and citizens in stewardship of National Wildlife Refuge lands and waters, for migratory bird conservation and habitat management, fishery restoration and protection, and habitat conservation and acquisition actions. The provision of this scientific and nationally standardized ecological data over the Internet benefits the public by providing current geospatial information on the location and status of wetlands to promote the understanding and conservation of these vital habitats.

4. Charter/Plan: Do you have a current charter or plan for collection? If so - please describe (include how recently the charter/plan was implemented and whether it is in need of update).

Yes. The Service's 2002 Strategic Plan for the NWI, titled *National Wetlands Inventory: a Strategy for the 21st Century*, was approved by the Department and provided to OMB in 2002. This Plan was developed as an

outgrowth from an OMB directive to the Service to update wetlands maps and make them available on the Internet. The Plan is being implemented nationally and regionally. The Service is strategically updating digital wetland maps, emphasizing wetland status and trend analyses, and intensifying assessments using wetlands data to help decision-makers and the public conserve aquatic habitats for fish, wildlife, and people. This Plan is in line with the DOI Strategic Plan to improve the scientific information base for resource management, technical assistance, and decision-making, as well as the Administration's Electronic Government initiatives. NWI digital map data are a major integral element of the Service's data holdings and enterprise architecture.

The Service also has Chair responsibilities for the FGDC Subcommittee on Wetlands Data, chartered by Exhibit dated September 30, 1991. This Exhibit addresses lead agency responsibility for the coordination of wetlands data related activities among Federal agencies and established a mechanism for the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of wetlands data financed in whole or in part by Federal funds. There are no plans to update the Exhibit at this time.

5. Performance Measures: Does your agency have performance measure for your data theme? If so, please list the measures and whether you have achieved your goals.

Yes. The Service has three wetland digital data performance measures:

- i. Acres of land digitally mapped annually. The Service completed 21 million acres in FY2004, exceeding the annual performance goal of 19 million acres.
- ii. Cumulative percent of lands with digital maps. The Service completed about 45% percent in FY2004, somewhat below the annual performance goal of 46.5%.
- iii. Cumulative percent of lands with digital maps 10 years old or less. The Service completed about 2.2%, somewhat below the annual performance goal of 2.6%.

6. Metadata Status: Is metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse? What percentage of this theme's data has metadata and is in a Clearinghouse node?

Yes. Of over 29,000 quadrangle maps of digital wetlands data that is available in seamless format over the Internet, 100% of it has metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse as well as via The National Map.

7. Standards: What is the status of this theme's data, process, transfer, and classification standards?

The theme's wetland data complies with the FGDC endorsed standard. The Service developed and uses the *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*. This Service classification system is the

federal standard for the ecological identification of wetlands that was approved by the FGDC on December 17, 1996. Since 1979, it has been the Service's policy to use this classification system for Service wetland-related issues and topics.

8. Progress: List FY 2004 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).

- **Digitized and provided online an estimated 21 million acres of wetland map landscapes and watersheds, to reduce backlog of maps in need of updating.**
- **Began updating the equivalent of over 600 digital wetland maps at strategic locations in the United States, Alaska, and Trust Territories.**
- **Implemented Wetlands Master Geodatabase (MGD) and began to serve seamless digital wetlands map coverage for a cumulative total of about 50% of the conterminous United States, and about 18% of Alaska.**
- **Provided online delivery of digital wetlands data with metadata from the MGD via the Service Wetlands Mapper and USGS The National Map (about 725,000 files downloaded), in order to meet expanding GIS and public user demand (about 6.2 million users of NWI digital wetlands mapper data).**

9. Participation: List participating Federal agencies.

The Service is working primarily with the Department's of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as Interior bureaus (Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, and the National Park Service).

10. Planned Activities: What are your planned activities for FY2005?

- **Digitize and provide online an estimated 20 million acres of wetland map landscapes and watersheds, to reduce backlog of maps in need of updating.**
- **Begin updating the equivalent of an estimated 800 digital wetland maps at strategic locations in the United States, Alaska, and Trust Territories.**
- **Complete and host seamless digital wetlands map coverage for a cumulative estimated total of about 50% of the United States.**

11. Policy: Do you have a formal agency policy in place for full and open access or data sharing? Are you able to fulfill this policy and provide public access with your current agency financial resources as allocated or are you in pursuit of collaborative federal partnerships to support data access?

Yes. Fish and Wildlife Service has an operational policy of full and open access to its digital wetlands and riparian data. The Service is also continuing to work collaboratively with the USGS and other Federal and State agencies via conservation partnerships to supply contemporary digital wetlands data commensurate with available funding.

12. Are there areas or issues regarding lead responsibilities for spatial data themes that require attention, or lessons-learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe.

With continued demand for contemporary digital wetlands data for use in community planning, resource management, and accomplishment reporting, the Service is continuing to assertively seek out opportunities to partner with others to accelerate the development and updating of the wetlands and riparian layers of the NSDI.

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